

SKATERS TO TRY FOR HONORS

AMATEURS TO DECIDE THE CHAMPIONSHIP THIS WEEK.

SOME SPEEDY MEN WHO WILL APPEAR AT THE MEET IN POUGHKEEPSIE.

The people who are fond of open-air ice skating in this country will have a chance to see

CHARLES MCCLAVE.
New-York Athletic Club.

Some of the skaters try for the championship honors at the National amateur meet and speed skating championship of America for 1899. This will be held at Spring Lake, Poughkeepsie, on January 26, 27 and 28, if the weather will permit. The meet will be managed by William Robertson, by permission of the National Amateur Skating Association of America. There are many skaters practicing at the local rinks who think they have a chance for some of the championship honors. Now that McCollough is not in the amateur ranks, it will give all the young men an equal chance to show what they can do. McCollough won everything in the amateur line last season. He could win at any distance, and now that he has been declared a professional many of the skaters are training hard to gain some of the honors that were held by him.

At some of the recent meets held around New-York and at the indoor rinks there is a rivalry. If a skater has a handicap he is challenged immediately by the one who started from scratch, and if they are matched to race in an indoor rink they expect the manager to offer them a prize. This has been refused several times, and

the result is that there is no race. The rule is that when two skaters are to race the loser is to buy the prize. This, of course, is refused.

Among many of the entries received there are "Eddie" Thomas, O. Roosa and F. D. Gibbs, of Newburg; F. R. Sager, West Point; F. Hoffman, G. P. Holland, E. B. Rodgers, E. A. Kent, William Kinsman, G. W. Buck, J. J. Collins, J. W. Ohnstead, J. Shaughnessy, P. Paulding, B. McPartlan and Charles L. McClave, of the New-York Athletic Club; W. H. Merritt, of St. John, N. B.; H. P. McDonald, of Brooklyn; Max Hornfeck, of Montclair; J. R. Bellefeuille and Le Roy See, of Berkeley School.

The long-distance races will probably be between McClave, Thomas, Gibbs, Paulding, Merritt and Bellefeuille, while the short-distance contests will be well fought for by the younger skaters in the meet. Le Roy See, the sixteen-year-old boy skater, now at Berkeley School, will make some of the older boys at the game strive hard to defeat him.

There will be many schoolboys enter for the race for those under sixteen years old, as there are some rapid skaters of that age.

Charles L. McClave, of the New-York Athletic Club, has one of the best records of any of the racers. In 1897 he won the twenty-five-mile amateur championship at Stamford, Conn. At the time of the race it was snowing hard. In 1898 he raced in one, two, five and ten mile contests, winning them all in one afternoon, with the weather 4 degrees below zero. He can stay with any of his rivals at any distance.

"Fred" D. Gibbs, of Newburg, made a good showing against McCollough in all his races last season, and has won all the contests which he has entered up the Hudson this season. "Eddie" Thomas, of Newburg, can push the crack locals hard at any distance, and never loses time when he is about to cut the corner.

F. R. Sager, who was a novice last season, has come into prominence this season and made a good showing at Poughkeepsie a few weeks ago.

Harry P. McDonald is also a starter. He is a Canadian. McDonald is good on a straight-away course from twenty-five yards to a mile. He will surprise some of his rivals. He has been skating in the indoor rinks of late, and has done some fast work.

Le Roy See, of New-York, is not only a trick bicycle rider, but also a speedy skater. He is

WILLIAM H. MERRITT.
A prominent amateur skater of St. John, N. B.

only sixteen years old, and is good from a half-mile to two miles, and is improving daily. He is matched to skate a number of indoor races this season. In one of his races he had a small limit on the scratch man, and he would have won if he had not fallen about forty yards from the finish, and with a small handicap he will surprise some of his rivals.

William H. Merritt, of St. John, N. B., has won many championships in Canada. He has done more indoor work and has skated a mile indoor in 2:43. He has defeated many of the cracks of Canada, and won the championship of the maritime provinces of Canada, skating in three one-mile contests, winning the first, skating a dead heat in the second and winning the third.

Max Hornfeck, of Montclair, will also be a starter. He has won several races around New-York in fast time. It is expected that he will make a good showing. He is also well up in the game of hockey and plays on the Montclair Athletic Club team.

B. McPartlan is a member of the New-York Athletic Club, has made a good showing for the last few years, and is now skating in good form. He is out looking for honors for the club he represents.

The following contests will be decided: In the afternoon of the 26th, a one-mile novice, scratch; 500 metres (546 8-10 yards) National championship; 1,500 metres (1,640 42-100 yards) National championship. In the evening, one-mile race for boys under sixteen years old, and a three-mile handicap. On the 27th, in the afternoon, two-mile handicap, one-mile pursuit race, and 5,000 metres (5,468 1-10 yards) National championship. In the evening, this being carnival night, a one-mile handicap and a five-mile

handicap. On the last day of the meet there will be a one-mile consolation race, open to those who did not win during the meet; a one-mile championship of Hudson Valley and a 10,000 metres (10,936 11-100 yards) National championship race.

QUEER PLACES FOR BIRDS' NESTS.

From The London Star.

A stroller upon a sea beach once picked up an old meat tin, in which, to his great surprise, he found a thriving family of wheatears. The

LE ROY SEE.
Berkeley School.

dead body of an owl, the skull of the skeleton of a man hanged for murder, and the mouth of the stone lion over Northumberland House have been turned to account by nest-building folk, and the time would fail to tell of hundreds of other strange places put to the same use. Letter-boxes, both public and private, seem to be irresistible, and a wagtail's nest was once found hidden under the half-deck of a pleasure boat anchored on a sheet of water. When the boat was used for taking trips on the lake the wagtails showed no objection to becoming sailors, but watched its motions carefully, perching on the gunwale or dipping round, but never quitting their home for long. They succeeded finally in rearing and carrying off their brood. Nests on the masts of ships and nests in railway carriages which have taken long journeys, the parents accompanying their goods and chattels, have been frequent.

What caprice can prompt a bird to choose a steam engine in full motion, a noisy blacksmith's forge, or a schoolroom full of children, rather than the green hedges or trees? The choice seems to be deliberately made—we cannot tell why. It plainly shows that we might have birds for our familiar friends wherever we are if we would cease to persecute them.

F. D. GIBBS.
Of the Newburg Wheelmen.

FAMINE AND FRATERNITY

A COGENT ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF THE CZAR'S PLAN OF DISARMAMENT.

Russia's new circular to the Powers in connection with the Peace Conference, coupled with her efforts in the various capitals of Europe and even in New-York, to negotiate a loan of \$100,000,000, may be accounted for by the fact that she has cut out for herself a costly policy of expansion in Eastern Asia, and that she is at the same time face to face with the most terrible and extensive famine that has ever devastated the Muscovite Empire, either in modern or ancient times. Indeed, it is estimated that a sum of no less than \$200,000,000 will have to be disbursed by the Government for the relief of the starving peasantry between this time and next May; while it is impossible to form any correct estimate of the colossal amounts that will be needed during the year which has now opened for railroad construction in Asia, for the subventioning of Oriental potentates and statesmen—in one word, for Russia's policy of expansion east of the Ural Mountains.

Everything that serves to tighten the grasp of the Czar on China tends to injure the commerce of the United States, Great Britain and of other Western Powers in the Mongolian Empire, and by refusing, therefore, to loan the money for which Russia has been asking recently, financiers in this country have helped to obstruct Muscovite projects that are calculated to injure American trade in China.

RUSSIA'S BILLION-DOLLAR RESERVE

While expansion in Asia and famine in the European portion of the Czar's dominions constitute this year a tremendous and altogether abnormal drain upon the resources of Russia, the latter differs from most countries that appear upon the money market as a borrower in that she possesses an immense reserve fund in gold, the accumulation of which has been one of the chief elements of disturbance in the financial circles of Western Europe and of the United States for several years. Russia's thirst for gold has been insatiable, and it is calculated that at the present moment the Imperial Bank of Russia and the Imperial Treasury in St. Petersburg, which are practically one, hold between them a billion dollars in gold. No one knows exactly the object of this vast hoard of the precious metal. Russian Government officials are renowned for their reticence in all that concerns the plans and the projects of their master, the Czar. It is generally believed that this billion dollars of gold is destined to serve as a reserve fund in the event of war, and this view is strengthened by the extraordinary reluctance manifested by Count de Witte, the Finance Minister, and by his colleagues to draw upon this fund. In fact, they prefer to apply to the foreign money markets for new loans, exposing themselves and their country to refusals and stipulations that are humiliating when the grandeur and the undeveloped resources of Russia are taken into consideration.

THE PITH OF THE NEW CIRCULAR

It is with the object of avoiding recourse to this vast gold reserve of the Imperial Treasury that the Czar has conceived the idea of a peace congress, the purpose of which is not so much disarmament as the avoidance of further expenditure for increased armaments. Indeed the chief point dwelt upon in the circular issued last week by Count Muraviev to the foreign Powers is that at the forthcoming peace conference the Governments taking part shall agree not to increase naval or military forces or expenditures for a stipulated period. As matters have been until now it becomes necessary every few years either to increase the standing army in order to maintain the proportion to those of the neighboring Powers, or to equip the body of troops with some new weapon at an enormous cost. No sooner has one new armament been perfected and adopted than some new one of still finer quality commends itself to the military authorities, and as often as not renders useless not only the gun as recently adopted but likewise all the ammunition, sometimes, too, the plant used for the production of the same.

Thus Germany and France have just completed the equipment of their respective armies with new quick-firing cannon, the most portentous military advance since the introduction of the breech-loading needle-rifle by the Prussians in the Austrian war of 1866. Up to now a six-gun battery has fired an average of some fifteen rounds a minute. Each of the new French and German guns is calculated to fire thirty rounds a minute itself, and the French have even managed to fire twenty-one rounds in a minute with one of their new guns. Somarvillous are the properties of this new quick-firing gun that according to the demonstrations of French and German experts, one will hold its own against an ordinary battery of six guns of the type now in use by Russia and other foreign Powers. Germany and France have each about five hundred batteries, each battery armed with six of these new quick-firing guns, and as they may be thus said to have increased the strength of their artillery sixfold, it becomes incumbent upon the other great Powers of Europe, particularly Russia, Italy, Austria and Great Britain, to follow suit in order to maintain the military balance between the Powers that has existed hitherto. It is generally admitted that artillery plays the chief role in every great war. Russia could not, therefore, afford to meet Germany, which could Austria or Italy venture to embark upon a war with France so long as the possession of quick-firing ordnance renders Germany and

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